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ABSTRACT

A series of six papers, this synthesis of literature on rural development and evaluation offers a starting point for rural development planning and projects from the national to the local level. The current state of knowledge is assessed and application techniques and methods are pinpointed. In the introduction, operation of the Functional Network of the sponsoring Southern Rural Development Center (SRDC) is examined. An overview paper on "The Process of Evaluation in Rural Development" includes why and how evaluating is carried out, pitfalls, and a state-of-the-art report. Methodological issues confronting the evaluator are discussed in "Concept and Philosophy of Evaluation and Rural Development," and the next paper, "Alternative Models of Evaluation and Their Application to Rural Development," systematically reviews 21 evaluation models. Issues of objectivity, integrity, privacy, personal harm, confidentiality, and accessibility are covered in "Responsibilities of the Evaluation Researcher: The ASA Code of Ethics as a Guideline." Particular attention to computerized retrieval systems is given in "Sources of Information for Evaluating Rural Development." A summary paper, "Evaluation and Rural Development," touches on evaluation models, evaluation information, needed evaluation training, and an SRDC program design/evaluation workshop. (NS)

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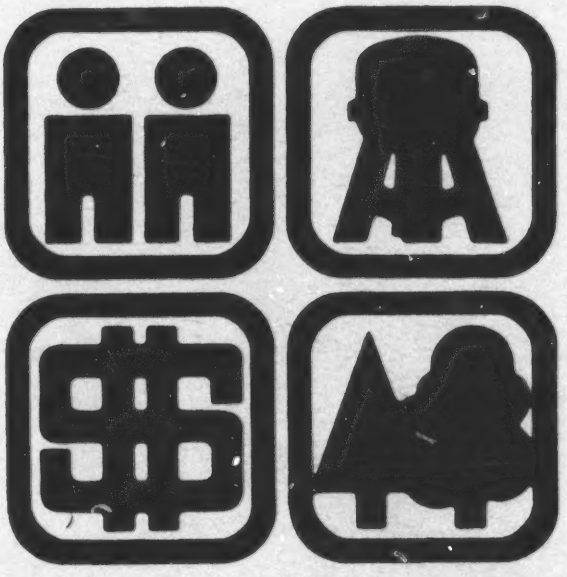

SYNTHESIS

Resources in Evaluation for Rural Development

Rural Development Series No. 2
Southern Rural Development Center

2

FOREWORD

Under the sponsorship of the Southern Rural Development Center, ten teams of researchers and educators throughout the southern region have devoted the past year to a synthesis of timely and practical research in selected areas of interest.

These ten Functional Networks, each under the leadership of a Center Associate, have prepared larger annotated bibliographies of important citations uncovered in their investigations. These synthesis papers follow the bibliographies, and are intended to relate the useful applications to be derived from their survey of the literature.

More than just summary documents or reports, these synthesis papers can serve as a starting point for rural development planning and projects from the national to the local level. They assess the current state of knowledge and pinpont techniques and methods for application of these findings.

This paper was prepared by the Network on Resources in Evaluation for Rural Development under the leadership of Dr. Arthur G. Cosby and Dr. G. Richard Wetherill at Texas A&M University. The Network's bibliography and additional copies of this paper are available from the Southern Rural Development Center.

William W. Linder

William W. Linder
Director
Southern Rural Development Center

A Synthesis

RESOURCES IN EVALUATION FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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This synthesis is the product of an SRDC Functional Network with chairmanship at Texas A&M University. A contractual agreement between the SRDC, Texas A&M University, and the Cooperative State Research Service of the U. S. Department of Agriculture provided for this participation and cooperation.

One of a series of syntheses prepared by research Functional Networks for the Southern Rural Development Center, Mississippi State, Mississippi.

SRDC Synthesis Series #2

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Preface

This manuscript was prepared as a response to the rural development practitioner's need for knowledge on the subject of evaluative research. However, this paper may best be viewed as just the top of the evaluation iceberg. We hope to have included most of the relevant concerns for evaluation from the practitioner's standpoint.

The contents of this document are as varied as the wide-ranging discipline of evaluation research. Beginning with the Introduction, Cosby presents the concepts of evaluation and of the "Functional Network" which inspired this work. The first paper, "The Process of Evaluation in Rural Development," by Wetherill, is an overview of the field of evaluation as it applies to rural development. Included here are such topics as: What, Why, and How We Evaluate, Problems and Pitfalls in Evaluation, and a State-of-the-Art report. Narrowing the scope somewhat, "The Concept and Philosophy of Evaluation and Rural Development" by Ladewig, discusses the concept of evaluation with special attention directed toward methodological issues confronting the evaluator. Staying within the methodological realm of evaluation for the moment, the next paper, "Alternative Modes of Evaluation and Their Application to Rural Development," by Wetherill and Buttram, systematically reviews twenty-one models that have been advanced as approaches to doing evaluation. This systematic synthesis results in the base-phase concept as a way of viewing evaluation procedures.

A great concern for all program evaluators and those to whom evaluation is done is that of ethics in evaluation. In "Responsibilities of the Evaluation Researcher: The A.S.A. Code of Ethics As A Guideline,"

Clinton focuses in a novel way upon the ethical problems associated with the conduct of evaluation. The special responsibilities of evaluation researchers are outlined along with issues of objectivity, integrity, privacy, personal harm, confidentiality, and accessibility.

At one time or another, both beginning and veteran evaluators will have a need for better ways of accessing useful background materials for their evaluation efforts. "Sources of Information for Evaluating Rural Development: An Overview," by Grayburn, Magee, and Hoskins is an account of the authors' experiences in searching for evaluation and rural development literature. The use and accessibility of computerized retrieval systems is given particular attention.

For the final paper in this set, "Evaluation and Rural Development," by Cosby and Wetherill, the total experience of the Functional Network is capsulized. This paper summarizes the types and varieties of evaluation models, how information on evaluation may be obtained, the type of evaluation training that is needed in rural development, and a brief description of a program design and evaluation workshop conducted for personnel in rural development.

True synthesis is a difficult concept to pin down. This is especially true for two fields as far flung as those of evaluation and rural development. Hopefully, we have included in this document some of the most relevant concerns relating to the juncture of both fields.

G.R.W.
Starkville, Mississippi
January, 1978

INTRODUCTION*

A growing concern at both federal and state government levels is for program accountability and evaluation. This concern extends to rural development. Accountability and evaluation are becoming key issues to social scientists performing either as program developers or evaluators. It can be argued that the area of rural development has special difficulties in addressing these concerns.

There has been no systematic attempt to assemble and synthesize evaluations related to either previous or ongoing rural development. Likewise, there has been no agreement or, to our knowledge, any systematic effort to identify those methods, techniques, and measures which would be of high utility to the evaluator of rural development programs. Since there appears to be a serious gap with regards to rural development evaluation, and since evaluation is becoming a requirement for many programs that use federal funds, a bibliographic search and synthesis of relevant literature on rural development has become mandatory.

The Functional Network, "A Synthesis of Evaluative Research Literature for Rural Development," is a creation of the Southern Rural Development Center in cooperation with the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station. Its charge has been to address the question of evaluation and rural development. Beginning in June 1975, the project was established as one of several Functional Networks funded by the SRDC to review and synthesize literature on a series of topics critical to the conduct of rural development in the southern region. Since the beginning of the Network, its goals have stressed the development of a set of annotated bibliographies and a synthesis of existing evaluation research literature. It has searched for those principles and procedures which hold promise for rural development evaluation in terms of existing programs and the planning and evaluation of future programs. Special attention has been given to those sources which are related to non-economic evaluations - for example, evaluations of programs designed to raise the overall quality of life, level of living, life satisfactions, knowledge, and leadership/decision-making skills of rural residents.

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*This introduction was written by Arthur G. Cosby, Associate Professor of Rural Sociology at Texas A&M University currently serving as Center Associate for the Southern Rural Development Center.

The Functional Network

The Southern Rural Development Center adopted the Functional Network as a mechanism to involve professionals across the region in review and synthesis of extant research literature salient to rural development. The Networks generally addressed the question, "What does the body of literature tell us about rural development and how can we use this information to improve rural development programs?" The guidelines of the network concept allowed for the inclusion of members from a wide range and variety of institutions in the region. This Functional Network, "A Synthesis of Evaluation Research Literature for Rural Development," was developed in the spirit of open membership and attempted to bring together scholars with divergent views and perspectives. The ten members of the Network included experiment station researchers and Extension agents, researchers from non-land-grant universities, a federal research administrator, graduate students, and an evaluator from a private firm.

CHAPTER I

THE PROCESS OF EVALUATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT*

Introduction

The rather brief history of evaluation in rural development has been characterized by an attitude of foreboding. This seems to be one of the most prevalent problems in this area at the present time. Such an attitude appears to stem mainly from a lack of information regarding what principles of evaluation are applicable to rural development. The undergirding purpose of this chapter is that of providing rural development practitioners with a brief sketch of the tools necessary to conduct an evaluation of rural development programs. Four key issues will be dealt with here: (1) the purpose of evaluation, (2) what we evaluate, (3) the evaluation process, and (4) the problems and pitfalls in evaluation. Although these four key issues cannot by any stretch of the imagination be considered as the total range of the evaluation process, they may be viewed as four issues which any potential evaluator must address before getting started in evaluative research.

There are many definitions of evaluation. Much of the controversy in the field today concerns the development of an adequate definition for evaluation [13]. Many of these controversies spring from definitions of evaluation which lend a threatening connotation to evaluation. Perhaps what would be most beneficial for the evaluation of rural development programs would be a definition of evaluation which is non-threatening in nature. One frame in which such an evaluation definition could be couched is one which results from the definitional dichotomy of "evaluation for program improvement" versus "evaluation for program justification." The most non-threatening definitions of evaluation tend to come from those who define evaluation as being for the primary purpose of program improvement, while the more threatening definitions relate directly to justification of programs. Therefore, for our purposes here, evaluation may be defined as the systematic examination of a program in operation for the purpose of improvement [29]. This process takes the form of assessing a program in terms of its stated goals and objectives. Such evaluative information is then used in order to make decisions concerning program improvement. Although such a definition may be limited and rather elementary, it can serve as a useful starting point for beginning an evaluation.

Evaluation research may be considered more applied than "pure." Even with all things considered, the ranges of evaluation are great. In terms of "things" evaluated, the range may run the gamut from classroom/teaching-type evaluations, through detailed program evaluations, all the way

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*This article by G. Richard Wetherill, Sociologist, U. S. Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station, is reprinted from Rural Sociology in the South: 1977, Harsha N. Mookherjee (Ed.), Cookeville, Tenn.: Tennessee Technological University, 1977.

up to the evaluation of social subsystems. In terms of the degree of evaluative rigor, the range may run from cerebral type of evaluations through formal evaluations. The techniques of evaluation research also encompass a wide range, including informal techniques (participant observations or other unobtrusive measures) up to and including experimental and quasi-experimental designs. It is usually up to the evaluator and/or program staff and administrators to determine where in these ranges the evaluation may be specified. Such things must be considered in developing a personal philosophy of evaluation.

Why Evaluate? The Purpose of Evaluation

Everyone evaluates. Our daily lives are filled with decisions we must make based on the conclusions which we draw from the data that we receive. This informal evaluation, more often than not non-verbalized, is part and parcel of our daily living.

In the case of project or program evaluation, all too often informal evaluation is the only type that has been done. Given the increased national emphasis for requiring program evaluation [12], what is needed now is a formalization of the ofttimes informal process of evaluation. The benefits of such formalization are potentially tremendous. At the very least, evaluation may be used to provide documentation concerning the history and/or impacts of a program. Better evaluations will provide program decision makers with the necessary evaluation information in order to help them make better decisions toward better programs. In this light, program evaluation can be used for both program improvement and program justification, and provide for program planning and policy making. The fact remains that, like it or not, program evaluation is fast becoming a mandatory part of program operations [30].

What Do We Evaluate?

The answer to the question posed by the title of this section is not simply answered by saying, "the program." In evaluation, we must be concerned with the components which not only make up the program, but also make up the evaluation. Here, we mean such things as: program objectives or goals, program personnel interaction, program processes, resources, intended audiences, evaluation objectives, types and levels of evaluation data, judgment making processes, evaluator roles and responsibilities, and the list could go on. In order for this "primer" to be most effective, it seems that possibly two major issues should be addressed. When the question is asked, "What should we evaluate?", the first answer should probably be "the objectives." Being the logical starting point for an evaluation, the objectives of a program should be adequate descriptors of what the program is all about. Generally, the jargon of evaluation labels program objectives as criteria for evaluation [19]. In many evaluation designs, criteria become the starting point for delineating what data are to be collected for the evaluation effort.

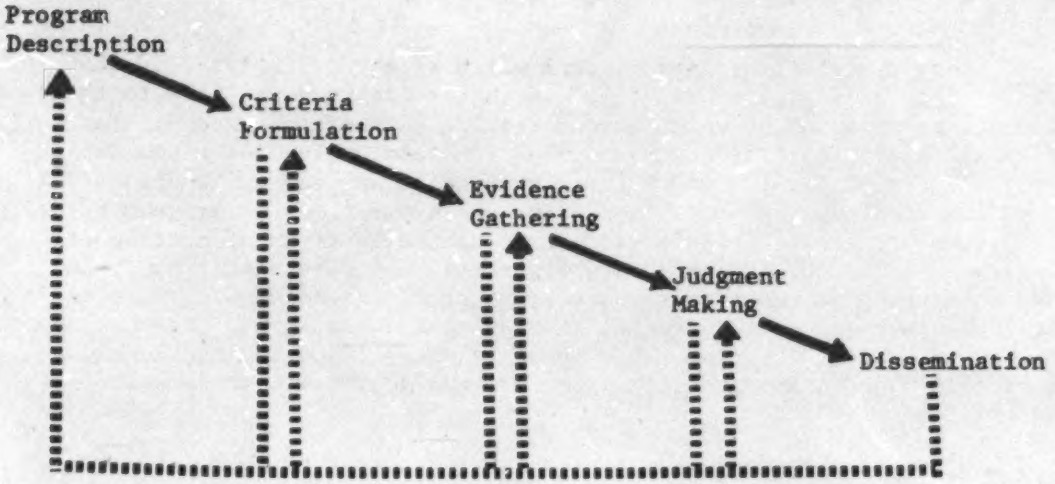
A major evaluation data concern which we have identified in the realm of social program evaluation is that relating especially to those non-economic variables which have a bearing on social programs. Part of the legacy of social program evaluation, and evaluation research in general, has been the concern for cost-benefit analysis. Needless to say, the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and aspirations of program target audiences are very difficult to operationalize in terms of cost-benefit analyses [18]. Dollars-and-cents figures do not necessarily apply to important program considerations such as staff interaction. There is an increasing emphasis in social program evaluation toward the measurement of non-economic variables. This issue is exemplified through such considerations as using attitudes of program recipients as a measure of program effectiveness.

What this all seems to point to is an expanded "bag of tricks" for the program evaluator. The evaluator must be aware of any type of data collection device, no matter what the source, which can aid him in more effectively evaluating a program. The evaluator must learn to rely not only on data gathered from detailed survey designs, but must also be able to apply more informal techniques such as participant observation [10]. Although evaluation data coming from many sources may tend to get involved, the chances become greater that fewer important aspects of the program will be neglected in the examination [15, 26]. In short, the social program evaluator must be flexible, and always innovative, in conducting an evaluation of a social program [1, 8, 9, 17, 24, 28].

The Evaluation Process

Just as there is no single, accepted outline for the procedure known as "the scientific method," the process of evaluation also has no single set of steps or procedures to follow in conducting an evaluation. In the jargon of evaluation, such processes may be called various names. In the literature, "the process of evaluation" may be subsumed under such labels as models, frameworks, or approaches to evaluation [20]. Generally, all these terms refer to the same thing, the evaluation process. Rather than to advocate any one particular model over another, we have found that there are similarities among the models [29]. As such, we have identified that the evaluation process encompasses several separate steps.

Logically, any process, especially the evaluation process, must have both a starting point and an ending point. The starting point of the evaluation process was identified as beginning somewhere prior to the actual implementation of an evaluation design. The ending point was identified as falling soon after the evaluation exercise was completed. These two points in the process of evaluation were considered important enough to be phases in and of themselves. Between these two starting and ending phases in the process, we identified three basic phases which totaled, represent a five-phase process of evaluation. Overall, the process of evaluation as presented in the following sketch lists the five elements which are more or less common to all the evaluation designs which we examined.



This process of evaluation is of course very general in appearance. The benefits of this generalized procedure are found mostly in its flexibility. With a general framework such as this, an evaluator may specify within each of the basic phases the process of evaluation which is most applicable to the social program being evaluated. The details are left up to the evaluator or the evaluation team.

The program description phase is the beginning phase of the evaluation process. During this phase the evaluator describes the program. This documentation is an attempt to put down on paper what the program is all about. This serves to direct the evaluator, program staff, and appropriate audiences as to the program's primary goals and what its courses of action have been. Generally, this first phase consists of a written description of the program which serves as a documentation of the goals and operations of the program.

The criteria formulation phase focuses the evaluation on specific aspects of the program. While it is important to consider the objectives of the program in setting up these criteria, it is almost impossible to examine systematically all aspects of the program. What is helpful here is to identify the most critical areas of the program's operation. These critical areas then become the focus of the evaluation. Standards, or acceptable levels of performance, must be developed for each of these criteria. Again, the objectives of the program cannot be ignored in the establishment of evaluation criteria.

The evidence-gathering phase concerns itself with the gathering of evaluative data. This phase in the process of evaluation specifies the data to be collected for evaluation evidence. Evidence is gathered concerning the performance or operation of the program according to the evaluation criteria formulated and established in the preceding phase. Data are collected during this phase on each of the specified evaluation criteria. Construction of instruments and appropriate statistical analyses of collected data occur during this phase. At this point the evaluation is probably more similar

to the traditional research investigation than at any other phase in the evaluation process. The skills and knowledge required of the evaluator relate to the principles and mechanics of research design, methodology, and analysis.

The judgment-making phase is the most important phase in the whole evaluation process. Without judgment making there would be no evaluation. The process of making judgments is usually left up to the evaluator. As a starting point for making judgments on the program, the process of evaluation requires that the data collected for evaluation be compared to the criteria established for evaluation and judgments be made on this information regarding the performance of the program. Such judgments are usually based on the discrepancy between the ideal conditions presented in the criteria and the real conditions as indicated by the data collection effort. Judgments and/or program alternatives are based upon the recognition and identification of such discrepancies.

The dissemination phase is the last phase of the evaluation process. Very few guidelines or procedures for reporting evaluation results have been set down. However, such findings are usually reported back to clients. Sometimes special contractual arrangements are made to include wider audiences. The use of the evaluative findings depends upon the status of the program operation. However, it is very important to remember that evaluation results must be fed back into the program. Only through such feedback can an evaluation make an impact upon future programming and program decisions.

These then are the five basic phases of the evaluation process. Although these five phases are necessary in any evaluation, additional specifications may easily be made within the phases in order to customize the process to any rural development program under examination. It must also be noted that these phases, or any specification thereof, do not necessarily have to be in a straight linear sequence. In other words, the process of evaluation is not locked into a 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 sequence. Re-specifications may have to be made during the process of evaluation. When such becomes the case, it is necessary to retreat back to an earlier phase in the development of the evaluation (dotted arrows, see sketch on page 6) so that the program may be adequately evaluated. Re-documentation of the program or respecification of the criteria may have to be done, especially because of the often dynamic nature of development projects.

Problems and Pitfalls

Needless to say, program evaluation is a dangerous thing. Evaluation has in its power the fate of the program. Misunderstandings as to the conduct of evaluation may often lead to splits in program staff sometimes going in as many as three directions, including administrators, evaluators, and field workers, all on different sides of the issue [11, 23, 31]. Until such a time as the process of evaluation is more completely understood by all rural development personnel, any evaluator or potential evaluator of a rural development project must be aware of the problems and pitfalls inherent in the evaluation research enterprise. A brief list of some of the things an evaluator should be concerned with in order to avoid problems might look something like this:

1. The ethical responsibilities of an evaluator should be beyond reproach [6].

2. The responsibility for program evaluation should be delegated to one person. This would include the commensurate authority to best be able to implement evaluation plans [3, 7].

3. The total staff of the program should be informed about what is going on in an evaluation. Evaluation plans must be communicated to all relevant program personnel, so there are no surprises with respect to what is going to happen for the evaluation [15, 21].

4. Reliance on a single source of data as evidence for evaluation should be scrutinized most closely. Having data from many different sources usually lends more validity to evaluation evidence [15, 26].

5. The evaluator is usually treated as an intruder into the program. As such, he must be aware of the pressures and constraints on the program being evaluated. The evaluator must be a diplomat [4, 14, 28].

6. The evaluator, along with program staff, must get together early in the process of evaluation in order to negotiate the terms of evaluation. Areas of such negotiation include: ways and means of dissemination, access to project personnel and records, audiences for the evaluation results, roles and responsibilities of the evaluator, etc. [2, 5, 16, 25].

7. The evaluator, as well as the evaluation, must be flexible. Usually, the dynamic nature of rural development programs precludes a strict reliance on detailed evaluation schedules. To a certain degree, evaluation plans should not act as a straight-jacket to evaluation [22].

8. Under most circumstances, evaluators ought not to get embroiled with actual decision-making functions in a program. The typical role of the evaluator might be that of spelling out options for program alternatives but not that of making actual decisions exclusive of program staff [15].

9. The evaluator should be committed to evaluation. His attitude toward the evaluation process should be positive. This is in contrast to his attitude toward the program, which should be unbiased [4, 22].

10. Evaluation feedback should be given to appropriate program personnel as the evaluation progresses. This does not mean, however, that evaluation results should be given out prematurely [15, 21].

11. If possible, get someone to react to your evaluation plans before implementing the plans. But know when to stop asking for advice [2, 5, 28].

The program evaluator is a potentially powerful yet potentially dangerous role. An evaluator must be a specialized generalist. The evaluator must have a knowledge of basic research methods and statistics, techniques of evaluation (the evaluator's bag of tricks), a knowledge of program development techniques (including proposal writing, budgeting, staffing, program planning, program implementation, and above all, the ability to define goals and objectives), and knowledge of the social system in which the program is operating as well as interpersonal dynamics internal to the program.

In sum, a program evaluator, as well as program evaluation, is in a unique position to aid rural development. Rural development programs which have evaluation built into the program not only have a higher likelihood of success, but are also good examples for subsequent development programs. There is no magic formula for evaluation, nor is any program evaluator a magician. The fact remains, however, that program evaluation has become almost mandatory not only for rural development programs, but also for social action programs in general. The more that is known about the evaluative research enterprise, the better it will be for the acceptance of evaluative results, hence program improvement. When this occurs, evaluative research will not be the "shady" enterprise which many people suggest that it is.

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CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPT AND PHILOSOPHY OF EVALUATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT*

Evaluation research is becoming increasingly important to a large number of people for a variety of reasons. Administrators confronted with increasing competition for funding are looking to evaluative research to determine program effectiveness. Many sociologists and other social scientists concerned about the failure of governmental policy making to be informed by the information and knowledge generated in their disciplines regard evaluative research as an avenue for social science input into governmental policy making. Legislators striving for more efficient utilization of limited resources are initiating legislation which requires evaluative research for assessment of whether or not federal policies and programs are meeting the needs of society.

Although Congress has passed legislation that has included both the requirements for evaluation and the funding for carrying it out, the federal government as a whole and most agencies have no overall system for effectively evaluating program and project effectiveness [15]. Instead, most evaluations have been guided by definitions of evaluation which have equated it with either measurement and testing, fulfilling of objectives, or professional judgments [1].

In spite of the increased presence of evaluation research, much disagreement exists between and among administrators, program personnel, and social scientists concerning the appropriate and legitimate role of evaluation in social action programs. In fact, serious questions exist pertaining to the capacity of evaluation research to provide sufficiently sound information.

Mann [8], for example, suggests that the quality of evaluative research is remarkably poor and that there is little difference in the results of evaluative studies conducted in different content areas. After comparing nearly 200 evaluation studies of similar design he concluded, "Specifically, there is no indication that the findings of evaluative research are influenced by the method tested, the content area in which the test is conducted, the change criteria used or the methodological quality of the study of which the evaluation is made."

There is a growing persuasion—particularly in the field of education—that much of the difficulty encountered in evaluation research stems from the use of experimental design to evaluate ongoing programs or operational systems. Suchman [13] argues that action and service programs are ongoing events which cannot be separated from the entire operation process; therefore, an evaluation design must be utilized which provides input to the total programming process rather than confinement to the terminal effects of a program. Operations research constitutes such a design.

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*This article by Howard Ladewig, Program Evaluation Specialist, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas A&M University, is reprinted from Rural Sociology in the South: 1976, Virginia P. Steelman (ed.), Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University, 1976.

Starting from the premise that administrators, program personnel, and social scientists are equally responsible for the conduct of evaluation, this chapter will address several major issues and some nuances that affect the appropriate and legitimate role of evaluation research. The issues include the environment in which evaluation takes place, types of evaluation design, and selection of an evaluation design for social action programs in rural development.

Environment for Evaluation

Guba [4] suggests that any professional area that is so much avoided; that produces so many anxieties; that immobilizes the very people who want to avail themselves of it; that is incapable of operational definition, even by its most trained advocates (who in fact render bad advice to the practitioners who consult them); which is not effective in answering reasonable and important questions; and which has made little apparent effort to isolate and ameliorate its most serious problems--must indeed give us pause.

At present, a wide chasm exists between the desires of administrators and the requirements of researchers over the development of an evaluation design. Because of this chasm participation in evaluation research often has proven harmful to those involved in its undertaking.

For example, programs have been developed which all too often did not have clearly specified goals but did have unrealistically high expectations. The setting of such goals is a matter of policy, but when the policy makers do not specify goals clearly and still require evaluation, the evaluators are put in the uncomfortable position of deciding what the goals were that the policy makers had in mind. Thus, when high expectations are not realized, negative findings are not easily accepted [10].

Dissatisfaction with evaluation findings may result in evaluation practices being attacked on methodological grounds for political and bureaucratic purposes. The researcher becomes the center of controversy and the debate transfers from ideology to methodology [16].

On the other hand, administrators are keenly aware of poor or inappropriate evaluation designs. Often the aims and character of programs are misconceived by the evaluator and as a result evaluation design and execution are of limited value [3]. Also, ample evidence exists of evaluations that have focused rather heavily on testing of hypotheses of interest primarily to the evaluator and of little interest or value to the decision maker [5].

Under existing conditions it is difficult to blame program personnel for avoiding evaluation when the basic relationship between evaluator and practitioner is one of the former judging the work of the latter. This judgment often constitutes a threat to those responsible for program activities' reaching stated objectives.

Correspondingly, social scientists cannot be faulted for their reluctance to conduct evaluation when they must contend with conceptual and methodological problems; problems of relationship, status, and function;

practical problems; and problems of career and reward. Added to that, evaluation is becoming increasingly political [14].

Types of Evaluation

Much of the difficulty encountered in evaluation originates in the use of an evaluation design that is not appropriate to the type of program being evaluated. Evaluation can occur on several levels and use different research designs which vary in their approximation to the ideal scientific experiment [13].

Within the broad category of research the distinguishing characteristics of evaluation research is that the measurement of outcomes takes place. either under actual operating conditions or under conditions that reflect in some reasonable degree the problems associated with operating actual programs [16]. Within this broad category of evaluation research two types of evaluation may be distinguished: those based on experimental design and those based on evaluation of the total system.

The purpose of field experiment evaluation is to determine: (1) the validity of a particular approach as a means toward the achievement of some desired change or objective, and (2) the ability to institute a workable program based on that approach [13]. Systems models place emphasis on increasing program effectiveness rather than success or failure. Although systems evaluation can serve such other functions as knowledge building and theory testing, unless it gains serious hearing when program decisions are made, it fails in its major purpose [14].

Field Experiments

The field experiment evaluation is based on principles of the experimental model. Guided by a pre-determined plan, the evaluator intentionally manipulates one or more of the independent variables, and then observes the changes in the dependent variables. To insure that observed differences among groups really reflect differences in the independent variables, the experimental groups are usually selected randomly [11].

Although the logic of experiment design is nearly infallible, evaluators have had limited success in implementing a true experimentation outside the laboratory. Instead, most studies have collected evidence based on observation of natural variations in the independent variables. This type of setting is referred to as a quasi-experimental design. The important characteristic of quasi-experiments is that some force clearly unrelated to the dependent variable causes the variation in the independent variable [11].

Several quasi-experimental designs are presented [7], ranging from "one shot case studies" to experimental-control group designs with randomization and rigorous management of all foreseeable variables influencing internal and external validity. Each has applicability to a particular setting or program. The reader may wish to consult the references listed for a more thorough discussion of the internal and external validity limitations of each paradigm.

Systems Models

The objective of systems evaluation is constant program assessment and improvement. A systems model is programmatic research whose major function is to aid those responsible for making decisions in planning and adjusting their activities in an attempt to increase the probability of achieving desired action or service goals. Such models have been called process models and have had their major development in the field of operations research [13]. Two variations of operations research will be examined--one whose major orientation is program input and one concerned with program output.

Product evaluation measures and interprets attainments during the project term as well as at the end of a project cycle. Activities include devising operational definitions of objectives, measuring criteria associated with the objectives of the activity, comparing these measurements with predetermined absolute or relative standards, and making rational interpretations of the outcomes using the recorded context, input, and process information. Experimental design can and should be employed in certain kinds of product evaluation situations. However, change in design application may be required to account for individual differences in clientele.

Others provide additional support for this systems orientation to evaluation. Weiss [14] says that programs have other functions and have consequences besides achieving official goals and these are worthy of study Suchman [13] contends that experimental design with its emphasis on success--failure is neither applicable nor relevant to ongoing programs. Critics of experimental design usually offer three major judgments of its utility.

1. Experimental design fails to provide for continual program improvement.

2. Experimental design provides useful information at the terminal point of a program but is useless in planning and implementing a program.

3. Experimental control is not practical in most instances.

Thus, operations research is the appropriate design because it presents the entire process of program development and management with the focus of evaluation being upon day-to-day operation of the system as a whole. The results of this type of evaluation research become applicable to decision making at all stages of program planning, development and operation [13].

Systems Output Evaluation

The function of output evaluation is to provide feedback from results to decisions. Output evaluation: (1) assesses the effectiveness of an ongoing program in achieving its objectives, (2) relies on the principles of research design to distinguish a program's effects from those of other forces working in a situation, and (3) aims at program improvement through a modification of current operations [15].

Output evaluation is concerned with questions of program effectiveness more than of program efficiency. In this respect, it is goal-oriented, focusing on output rather than input. Output evaluation differs from program analysis and policy analysis, which usually compare existing and hypothetical alternative program solutions to the same problem.

This design distinguishes four major types of evaluation--program impact evaluation, program strategy evaluation, project evaluation and project rating.

Program impact evaluation is assessment of the overall effectiveness of a national program in meeting its objectives, or assessment of the relative effectiveness of two or more programs in meeting common objectives. Its goal is to assist policy makers in reaching decisions on program funding levels or on possible redirection of a program.

Systems Input Evaluation

One of the most thorough examples of evaluation of an operational system (education) is provided by the Phi Delta Kappa National Study Committee [9]. A brief summary of their efforts will be presented to illustrate evaluation based on input effectiveness. For a more thorough treatment of educational evaluation and decision making, the reader is referred to the reference cited.

In contrast to research methodology where the emphasis is on generation of new knowledge, evaluation methodology--particularly in the field of education--is concerned with the process of delineating, obtaining and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives. This information is not necessarily new knowledge and is highly particularistic and specific to a decision situation rather than being generalizable to many or all settings.

Although the term "judging" is central to the definition of evaluation, the evaluator who participates in decision making destroys his own objectivity and, hence, his utility. Thus, educational evaluation may be defined as the process of delineating, obtaining, and providing information useful to decision makers for judging decision alternatives.

This systems perspective identifies four types of decisions for which evaluation research can be conducted: planning, structuring, implementing, and recycling.

Planning decisions specify major changes that are needed in a program--either ends or means or both. Structuring decisions specify the means to achieve the ends established as a result of planning decisions. Implementing decisions are those involved in carrying through the action plan. Recycling decisions are concerned with attainments at any point in a program. They are used to determine the relationship of attainment to objectives and whether to continue, terminate, evolve, or drastically modify an activity.

Corresponding to these four decision types are four types of evaluation: context, input, process, and product. Although specific evaluation designs for each type vary according to the setting for change, each has a general purpose.

Context evaluation supplies the background for the determination of objectives. It provides an initial basis for defining objectives operationally, identifying program strategies, and developing proposals for outside funding. Context evaluation monitors the system to maintain a current baseline of information about it and compares actual and intended system performance. PERT is one example of a systems analysis technique.

Input evaluation provides information for determining how to utilize resources to meet program goals. This is accomplished by identifying and assessing: (1) relevant capabilities of the organization, (2) strategies for achieving program goals, and (3) designs for implementing a selected strategy. One technique useful for input evaluation is cost-benefit analysis.

Process evaluation provides periodic feedback to those responsible for implementing plans and procedures. Its main objectives are to detect or predict effects in procedural design or implementation, provide information for program decisions, and maintain a record of the procedure as it occurs.

Program strategy evaluation is assessment of the relative effectiveness of different techniques used in a national program. Its goal is to inform those responsible for programs of the different strategies or methods used by projects in the national program.

Project evaluation is assessment of the effectiveness of an individual project in achieving its stated objectives. Its goal is to determine ending results.

Project rating is assessment of the relative effectiveness of difference in local projects in achieving program objectives. Projects operating in similar environments may be compared.

The success or failure of a program may be evaluated in terms of five categories of criteria: (1) efforts or input, (2) results of the effort or effectiveness, (3) program impact in relation to total amount of need, (4) cost effectiveness or a ratio between effort and impact, and (5) the programming process [12].

Evaluation Design for Rural Development

The selection of an evaluation design and, hence, its appropriate and legitimate role cannot be founded on a self-contained, one-time study based on before-after comparison of a single stimulus and confined to the terminal effects of the program. Nor can it be derived from an approach designed primarily for program analysis and program improvement--although these are desirable activities.

To evaluate means to assess value. Before the assessment can take place, the desired value must be understood [13]. Value can be assessed in several ways including intuition, experience, available facts, and research. To assess the value of a program for rural development on any

basis other than research and the principles of modern experimental design reduces the probability of distinguishing program effects, if any, from the effects of other programs and of the environment.

In considering the objections to experimenting design discussed previously, Houston [6] makes the following points:

1. The criticism that experimental design precludes change and improvement of the program makes the dubious assumption that modifications tend to improve a program, and appears to confuse internal with external validity.

2. That experimental design cannot provide information when it is needed assumes that measurement and analysis must await the terminal point of the program. Subsets of sampling units provide an acceptable measure for short-term feedback.

3. Randomization is often precluded for moral, social, or psychological reasons. Randomization does not require a "no treatment" group--it does require that the control group not receive a treatment whose outcomes are likely to resemble those of the program being evaluated. In addition, several techniques are available by which control-experimental groups can be analyzed [2].

The design cannot be developed, however, until those responsible for the program identify the values to be assessed in the fashion of specific goals or objectives, precise formulation of activities capable of achieving the specified goals and the creation of standards against which the program can be compared. Alkin [1] suggests that the evaluator can help during the initial stages by pointing out inconsistencies, potential difficulties, or additional data that might modify the decision maker's views on the relevance of certain concerns. Nevertheless, the decision maker, and not the evaluator, determines the nature of the domain to be examined.

Administrators have particular needs and evaluators have specific requirements. These needs and requirements can be neither in conflict nor ignored in the design of the evaluation. Perhaps the role of the Rural Development Center should be to provide leadership in the meshing of these needs and requirements so that an evaluation design can be developed that provides information to serve as a rational basis for making objective judgments on the economic and social costs and effects of a national program or local project for rural development.

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CHAPTER III

ALTERNATIVE MODES OF EVALUATION AND THEIR APPLICATION TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT*

Evaluation research, as an emerging discipline, has not had much time to solidify its theory, methods, and techniques. Legislative pressures have been placed on social action programs [7]. As part of the "boomtown" atmosphere surrounding evaluative research, there has been a great influx of ideas as to how evaluation is to be accomplished. These process models are from each of the many disciplines which lay claim to evaluative research. What seems to have been needed for a time now is a synthesis and comparison of the various types of models used in conducting evaluations. This paper is a direct attempt to cut through the jargon of the multifaceted field of evaluative research.

Introduction to Evaluation and Rural Development

A Definition of Evaluation

For the purposes of this chapter, evaluation may be defined as the systematic examination of a program in operation for the purpose of improvement. This process takes the form of assessing the program in terms of its stated goals and objectives. Such evaluative information is then used in order to make decisions concerning program improvement. There are four key elements to this definition of evaluation.

The first of these key elements is that systematic examination in evaluation implies a process. This means that the collection of steps used in the evaluation of a program have a logical sequence. Such a step-by-step configuration can insure a better evaluation accomplishment.

The next key element which needs to be stressed is the concept of a program in operation. Although this particular idea may reflect the authors' biases toward ongoing or built-in program evaluation, it is believed that this constitutes a critical element for evaluative research. When evaluation is an integral part of any program, there is a greater probability of examining the program's stated goals and objectives than when the evaluation is done in post hoc sense.

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A third key element to this definition of evaluation is the direct orientation to decision-making mechanisms. Evaluation data should be used in order to facilitate decision making for program improvement. However, this particular definition most definitely leaves open the option for the evaluator to participate in program improvement decisions or recommendations. Nevertheless, programming decisions must be made as befitting the role of evaluative research.

A fourth and final element of this definition of evaluation is that of program improvement. As alluded to above, program improvement through decisions is an integral part of evaluative research. It is the special province of evaluative research to yield objective information for program modification decisions. There does, however, seem to be a dichotomy between evaluation for improvement and evaluation for justification. This issue will be dealt with at another point in this chapter.

A Non-Definition of Rural Development

There is a definite problem having to do with the defining of rural development. While many people seem to know what it is, the problem arises when they try to set it down in definition form. For the purposes of this chapter, it would then seem logical to assume a "common knowledge" definition of rural development. Hence, no formal defining of rural development will be set down in this chapter. However, there are certain characteristics of "rural development" which could be considered in any such definition. By way of trying to draw some boundaries around the concept of rural development, the following continuums are offered: from facilities and services-building to people-building; from economic factors to social factors; from governmentally imposed programs to local self-help projects, and the list could go on. Basically, rural development is predicated on a recognized judgment that there are differences and/or disparities between rural and urban sectors. Rural development encompasses programs which are directed at reducing such disparities through planned change.

Evaluation Models

Evaluation, like any other developing discipline has adopted a particular jargon. Because evaluation is such a relatively new discipline, numerous "models" of evaluation exist. Each model is advocated by a particular group and such models represent the particular perspectives and biases of that group. The term "model" is somewhat of a misnomer. Steele [17] uses the terms "models," "frameworks," and "approaches to evaluation" interchangeably. A more accurate descriptor than evaluation models might be "evaluation processes." Each "model" is really a description of a process whereby a program is evaluated.

Tables 1 and 2 provide a comparison of some 21 models of evaluation. Although not exhaustive, the models selected for inclusion are representative of the range of possible model alternatives. Included in the description of the evaluation process is a definition or perspective of evaluation, along with a set of dimensions or steps to use in examining the performance of a program. In Table 1, information is provided about the perspective of evaluation adopted by each model. In Table 2, each model is compared to a sequence of base phases. A brief description of these base phases is provided later in this chapter. Although this comparison is an approximation at best, it is hoped that, as such, it will provide a useful beginning for a comparative examination of these models.

While the base phases set up for this chapter are represented as being in linear sequence, the models which are represented in this manner may not necessarily be "flat." Cycles and dimensionality are represented where possible. Overall, however, this representation has as its purpose the laying out of process.

Base Phase Concept

In reviewing the evaluation literature, it was apparent that most evaluation models could be best understood through the utilization of a common framework or sequence of phases. Each of the models has developed a particular jargon and adopted different emphases; however, all share certain characteristics. Consequently, rather than to describe each of the models separately, it was thought that a more useful approach for the purposes of this chapter would be to describe some common sequence of stages. By adopting this approach, a more general overview of the process of evaluation is obtained.

Phase I — Program Description

The first phase of the base phase concept in evaluation is program description. During this phase, the evaluator, with assistance from the program staff, describes the program according to its goals and objectives, operation, and environment. More simply, the evaluator attempts to put down on paper what the program is all about. This serves to direct the evaluator, program staff, and appropriate audiences to the program's primary goals and consequent courses of action. The result of this effort might be considered the program's blueprint. Although, this process is seldom carried to such great detail. Descriptions may be graphic, written, or some combination of both. Often this description might be the program staff's conception of how the program should exist ideally. It then provides a "standard" by which to evaluate the program's actual performance. Generally, Phase I consists of a written description of the program at some level of specificity; it then serves as a documentation of the goals and operations both to program staff and other relevant parties.

Table 1
COMPARISON OF PURPOSES OF EVALUATION MODELS

Author	Purpose
Alkin [1]	To provide a research-oriented, case study approach to evaluation in order to increase the effectiveness of action programs.
Allerhand [2]	To report to program decision makers evidence useful in selecting among alternatives.
Benedict [3]	To establish broad procedures for the conducting of the evaluation.
Edwards, Guttentag, and Snapper [4]	To provide research-based information to program decision makers about possible programming alternatives.
Fairweather [5]	To provide a method of evaluation which compares alternative strategies of social innovation while keeping individuals at the forefront.
Gronlund [6]	To provide a systematic process for the determination of the extent to which already specified program goals are achieved.
Hammond [8]	To determine whether innovation is effective in achieving expressed objectives.
Henderson and Bond [9]	To collect data, make measurements, specify implications and draw conclusions in relation to established program objectives and evaluative criteria.
Leinhardt [11]	To provide a strategy for internal evaluation which would include the gathering of data from multi-disciplinary sources in a coordinated evaluative effort.
Moe [12]	To determine or measure the quantity of activities, programs, events, inputs, outputs, impact and to judge the value or worth of what has been done or what has resulted.

[1] It should be noted that in the preparation of Tables 1 and 2, the information presented is the interpretation of this paper's two authors.

Table 1
(continued)

Author	Purpose
Provus [13]	To determine performance of program relative to standard in order to make decisions on whether to improve, maintain, or terminate a program.
Riecken [14]	To measure desirable and undesirable consequences of an action intended to advance some goal valued by the author.
Scriven [15]	To establish and justify merit or worth of program according to priorities identified during needs assessment.
Stake [16]	To describe and judge educational programs based on a formal inquiry process.
Steele [18]	To provide data for decisions about the program in process or for decisions relating to future programming strategies.
Stufflebeam [19]	To provide relevant information to decision makers regarding program operation.
Suchman [20]	To determine the degree of success or failure through the judgment of a program of planned change in relation to the desired result.
Tankersley [21]	To facilitate program adjustments in order to increase present program effectiveness and increase the probability of success for future programs.
United Nations [22]	To determine the extent to which the program's objectives are being met and to make an overall assessment of the program's socio-economic impact upon rural life.
Weiss [23]	To provide information for effective program decision making.

Table 2
BASE PHASE COMPARISON OF 21 EVALUATION MODELS

BASE PHASES / MODEL	Program Description Phase I	Evaluative Criteria-Formulation Phase II	Evidence-Gathering Phase III	Judgment-Making Phase IV	Dissemination Phase V
Alkin [1]	Assessment of the problem	Establishing basic design; identification and stipulation of the research strategy	Type of research staff Techniques for data collection	(Base Phase IV not stated)	Reporting of results
Allerhand [2]	Systems assessment Program planning	Program implementation	Program improvement	Program improvement	
Benedict [3]	Negotiation of the contract Design of the evaluation	Implementation of the evaluation design			
Edwards, Guttentag, and Snapper [4]	Recognition of a decision problem and definition of its nature and dimensions		Probability evaluation	Outcome evaluation Actual choice among acts	
Fairweather [5]	Definition Innovation	Comparison	Evaluation		
Gronlund [6]		General objective Specific learning outcomes	Evaluation	Techniques	
Hammond [8]	Planning	Implementation	Product	Recycling	
Henderson and Bond [9]		Setting evaluation objectives and criteria	Making objective measurements and processing information	Making objective judgments to supplement objective measurements	Providing evaluation findings for program decision making
Knox [10]	Program description	Program intents as to inputs, transactions, and outcomes	Observed inputs, transactions, and outcomes	Congruence testing between intents and observed data Specific judgments	
Leinhardt [11]			Gathering data from multi-disciplinary sources	Evaluation	
Hoe [12]	Defining the context of development		Documenting inputs Documenting processes Documenting outputs	Assessing overall impact	
Provus [13]	Program design	Evaluation design 1. Design 2. Implementation 3. Process 4. Product	Data collection	Feedback	

Table 2
(continued)

BASIC PHASES / MODEL	Origins Description Phase I	Evaluative Criteria-Formulation Phase II	Evidence-Gathering Phase III	Judgment-Making Phase IV	Dissemination Phase V
Hochen [14]		Determining program objectives	Describing operations Measuring effects	Establishing a baseline Controlling extraneous factors Detecting unanticipated consequences	
Scriven [15]		Needs assessment	Compression	Credentialing	Dissemination
Stake [16]	Rationale	Description matrix Intents Observations		Judgment matrix	Dissemination
Steele [18]		Criteria	Evidence	Judgment	
Stufflebeam [19]	Context evaluation	Input evaluation	Process evaluation	Product evaluation	
Suchman [20]	Goal Setting	Program planning Goal measuring	Putting program into operation	Assessing the effect of program operation Value formation	(Recycle)
Tumbersley [21]		Documenting	Arraying evidence	Appraising	
Weiss [23]		Finding out the goals of the program Translate goals into measurable indicators	Collect data on indicators from those exposed to the program Collect similar data from control group	Compare data from experimental and control groups in terms of goal criteria	

Phase II -- Criteria Formulation

The next phase serves to focus the evaluation on certain aspects of the program. Obviously, most rural development programs are so complex that it is nearly impossible to examine systematically every aspect of such programs. Consequently, critical areas in the program's operation are identified. These critical areas become the focus of the evaluation. Standards or acceptable levels of performance must also be developed for each of these criteria. For example, suppose one of the critical evaluative areas for a rural development program concerned the increased use of Extension educational services. The program staff would then set for themselves a level of acceptable performance (e.g., use of services would increase 25%). This criterion serves as a standard by which to judge the program's performance. The formulation of evaluation criteria serves two purposes: (1) it focuses the evaluation effort on critical areas and (2) it sets standards of acceptable performance so the program can be evaluated.

Phase III -- Evidence Gathering

In the third phase of evaluation, evidence is gathered concerning the performance or operation of the program according to the evaluation criteria formulated and established in Phase II. More simply, data are collected for each of the specified evaluative criteria. Construction of instruments and appropriate statistical analyses of collected data occur during this phase. The evaluation is probably more similar to the traditional research investigation during this phase than during any other phase. The skills and knowledge required of the evaluator are the principles and mechanics of research, design, methodology, and analyses.

Phase IV -- Judgment-Making

The criteria established in Phase II and the evidence (or data) collected during Phase III are used in making decisions regarding the performance of the program in Phase IV. Basically, the data (or actual performance) of the program are compared to the established criteria (or ideal performance) for that program. Obviously, three conditions could exist. The program could fall below a minimum acceptable level of performance, attain expected performance, or exceed projected performance. Decisions regarding the significance or effect of these performance discrepancies would be made. The models probably differ more during this phase than in any other phase. Some models provide for the evaluator simply feeding such information back to the program staff. Others encourage the evaluator to go beyond this feedback role and assist in the decision-making process itself. In all cases some determination of the program's merit is made during this phase.

Phase V - Dissemination

The last phase of evaluation is the dissemination of findings. Although very few models explicitly lay down guidelines or procedures for the reporting of evaluation results, it was apparent that this must always occur. Findings are usually reported back to clients. Special contractual arrangements are sometimes made to include wider audiences. The use of the evaluative findings depends upon the status of the program operation. If the program is terminating, the evaluation is viewed as summative and is a documentation of final assessment of the program's performance. This summative information might be used by other similar projects in designing and implementing their own particular programs. If the program is continuing, the evaluation is viewed as formative and as a source of information for program improvement. Appropriate changes can be implemented and evaluated and/or other areas of program operation and performance can be examined.

Implications for Rural Development

The implications for program evaluation in rural development are numerous. Because the major focus of most evaluation models is to document systematically the operation of the program according to some established criteria, decisions regarding the future operation of the program are facilitated by evaluation efforts. Before decisions can be made regarding program changes, documentation concerning current program activities must be obtained. The reason for such documentation is to provide evidence regarding the faithful installation of the program. If in fact all of the necessary components were not present and the program consequently did not achieve its goals, those components initially bypassed can be implemented and the program re-evaluated. On the other hand, if all of the necessary components were present and the program still did not achieve its goals, then systematic changes can be initiated which would allow for program improvement. Evaluation would then be ongoing until the stated program goals were achieved. As a third possibility, if all of the necessary components were present and the program achieved its goals, evaluation becomes a monitoring process to insure continued effective operation.

Another view of evaluation useful to rural development is that of evaluation for the purpose of continued program support. Although realistically evaluation for such a purpose is valid, the primary focus of this paper is that of defining evaluation as integral to program improvement. It must be remembered, however, that program improvement and program justification are not mutually exclusive concepts. The same evidence which was gathered for program improvement can also be used for justifying continued program support.

A generalized example of the above for rural development might fall into the realm of the pilot development project. In many cases, the continuation of such pilot projects on a larger scale is dependent upon the demonstration of program effectiveness. It is the nature of such a pilot project to act as a proving ground for rural development strategies. Based on the evaluative information obtained from the pilot project, only those strategies which have proven themselves effective at the pilot stage are tested on a larger scale. Consequently, greater probabilities of success are guaranteed. This is especially important when limited resources are available.

Conclusions

While this paper has not attempted to take an advocacy position either for the base phase concept of evaluation or for any of the individual models presented herein, it is hoped that the similarities among models was apparent. If it can be possible for those working in the areas of rural development and evaluation to cut through the jargon of the different orientations to evaluation, then meaningful advances can be made for development. Evaluation is then seen as a useful tool for rural development. Not only does it provide for the systematic evaluation of particular rural development programs, but it also allows for the selection of more effective rural development strategies.

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CHAPTER IV

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EVALUATION RESEARCHER: THE A.S.A. CODE OF ETHICS AS A GUIDELINE*

Many Americans were shocked daily as the tragic story of Watergate unfolded. American society is still going through the process of assessing the ramifications of Watergate. Perhaps in this aftermath of public distrust of government, we should examine practices of sociologists that could be called into question on both moral and ethical grounds, if not legal grounds.

Some ethical issues such as the peer-review system for grants, use and misuse of science by government, and the protection of human subjects are already being confronted in academic and non-academic circles. The peer-review system by which federal agencies dispense funds to outside scientists has come under attack by Congress. Senator William Proxmire has charged that the peer-review panels used by the National Science Foundation are packed with representatives from those universities that obtain the grants. At the present time the National Science Foundation is conducting its own internal review of this situation [7].

Two recent books, The Brain Bank of America by Phillip M. Boffey [8] and Advise and Dissent by Joel Primack and Frank von Hipple [20], focus upon significant dimensions of the relationship between government and science, as well as the use and misuse of science. Boffey's book, which explores the role of the National Academy of Sciences, points out that the academy allows federal agencies to comment on early drafts of reports and in the past has even permitted agencies to suppress reports they did not like. Boffey would like "the Academy to bring the nation' best scientific talent to bear on societal problems and then enunciate, unflinchingly and unequivocally, the nearest possible approximation to the truth" [12].

Primack and von Hipple contend that federal agencies do not really want advice, but instead want prestigious groups to legitimize decisions that have already been made. When "independent" advice is given it may be distorted to suit the purposes of the decision maker. Primack and von Hipple further contend that the process of advising must be made more public and open to a broader set of viewpoints. Lobbying before Congress is seen as necessary to keep executive agencies and their captive scientists honest. The advisory processes need to be more open, participatory, and responsive to the public interest, according to Primack and von Hipple [12].

Another issue that transcends disciplinary boundaries concerns the protection of the rights of research subject. Donald Warwick [25] contends that deception is common in social science research and that it not only

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*Paper presented by Lawrence Clinton, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, East Texas State University at the Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociology Section, Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, February 1-4, 1976 at Mobile, Alabama.

takes place in the laboratory but on the street and in our social institutions. Warwick challenges the idea that the end justifies the means. Studies such as Pygmalion in the Classroom and Tearoom Trade have been called into question on ethical grounds. In 1973, the American Psychological Association outlined new ethical responsibilities for researchers using human subjects. It was recommended that deceptive practices used to engage subjects in research be eliminated. Warwick ends his essay by noting:

> At present we too often dispose of ethical questions quickly so that we can get on with the real business of theory and research. The time has come to examine not only the techniques, but the moral implications of social research. Watergate was the latest example of corrosive deceit in America. In the social sciences, as in politics, the truth is often sacrificed on the altar of some higher principle. The cumulative results are a pervasive suspicion of government and an increasing wariness in dealing with our fellow man. These are the natural fruits of a deceiving society. Social scientists who do not hesitate to point an accusing finger at the White House are too quick to shrug off their own complicity in this moral decay. We should not put our own house in order with a permanent moratorium on deceptive research.

Given that questions of ethics are confronting researchers every day, the purpose of this paper is to review the code of ethics of the American Sociological Association and to explore areas of responsibility dealing with evaluation researchers.

Trends in Employment

In the future more and more sociologists will become involved in evaluative research. This prediction is based on two rather clear trends. First, the unemployment of Ph.D. sociologists in the academic world is on the increase [10, 11, 13, 14, 16]. "Unless demand booms or the birth rate decreases sharply in the immediate future, by 1980 there will be approximately 1,200 to 2,000 sociologists who have earned the Ph.D. degree, but who cannot find a career in sociology," [13]. Panian and DeFluer [19] note that:

> given a continuation of current political conditions there is little doubt that we are facing declining enrollments in colleges. It is not likely that colleges and universities will receive subsidies in the same amount as people with advance degrees. As tax revenues and support for private institutions continue to be tight, colleges and universities will be forced to cut expenses and departments will not add new faculty positions. More and more, therefore, academic employment is becoming a matter of replacement rather than new growth. Even the replacement market may eventually decline if present trends continue.

Given the grim academic market, the sociologist of the future will be increasingly forced to turn to non-academic employment. At present, roughly 25 percent of the total estimated number of sociologists have taken non-academic employment and this proportion is likely to increase [19]. "The majority of the non-academic sociologists work for non-profit (non-religious) organizations or government (federal, state and local) agencies in a research capacity [19].

Second, the availability of funds to do evaluation research and the demand for program evaluation will create an avenue of employment [5]. As Nelson Foote suggests "from projecting recent experiences, the principal non-academic source of employment for sociologists will be in performing evaluation studies, primarily for federal agencies. The recent abundance of such studies reflects the abundance of federal programs and sub-programs, purportedly experimental in nature, which seem to require evaluation in order to determine if they should be "continued, expanded, contracted, or terminated". Walter Williams in his book, Social Policy Research and Anaylsis [30], has already raised the question as to "whether the various teaching institutions in the social sciences research community will act to increase significantly the supply of policy-oriented researchers."

In that many of the sociologists in graduate school today will be employed in a non-academic setting doing evaluative research perhaps it would do the profession well if more colleges and universities began offering courses in evaluation research and as a part of such a course, address some of the ethical issues that will confront the sociologist qua evaluator.

Those that have already embarked on careers in evaluation research realize that the field is besieged with a host of problems; conceptual and methodological problems, problems of relationship, status, and function, practical problems, problems of career and rewards [26, 27, 28]. To speak of special ethical considerations only adds to the list. Evaluation reports are becoming front page news. Sociologists whose evaluative studies enter the political arena must be prepared for searching scrutiny of their methods and techniques [26].

Saad Nagi and Ronald Corwin, in their book, The Social Contexts of Research [17], attempt to analyze the way in which soical contexts influence the research process. They note that there exists a paucity of material to acquaint future researchers with their anticipated roles and the constraints placed upon them as researchers.

Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics adopted by the ASA in 1970 provides some guidelines for future researchers. The preamble of the code [2] succinctly argues the need for a code:

> Knowledge is a form of power, and in a society increasingly dependent on knowledge, the control of information creates the potential for political manipulation. For these reasons, we

> affirm the autonomy of sociological inquiry. The sociologist must be responsive, first and foremost, to the truth of his investigation. Sociology must not be an instrument of any person or group which seeks to suppress or misuse knowledge. The fate of sociology as a science is dependent upon the fate of free inquiry in an open society (316).

Sociologists should become familiar with the code because it does provide some guidelines. The "code" [2] states:

Code of Ethics

1. Objectivity in Research
In his research the sociologist must maintain scientific objectivity.

2. Integrity in Research
The sociologist should recognize his own limitations and, when appropriate, seek more expert assistance or decline to undertake research beyond his competence. He must not misrepresent his own abilities or the competence of his staff to conduct a particular research project.

3. Respect of the Research Subject's Right to Privacy and Dignity
Every person is entitled to the right of privacy and dignity of treatment. The sociologist must respect these rights.

4. Protection of Subjects from Personal Harm
All research should avoid causing personal harm to subjects used in research.

5. Preservation of Confidentiality of Research Data
Confidential information provided by a research subject must be treated as such by the sociologist. Even though research information is not a privilege communication under the law, the sociologist must, as far as possible, protect subjects and informants. Any promises made to such persons must be honored; however, provided that he respects the assurances to withhold information of misconduct of individuals or organizations. If informant or other subject should wish, however, he can formally release the researcher of a promise to all members of research organizations (i.e., interviewers, coders, clerical staff, etc.), and it is the responsibility of the chief investigators to see that they are instructed in the necessity and importance of maintaining the confidentiality of data. The obligation of the sociologist includes the use and storage of original data to which a subject's name is attached. When requested, the identity of an organization or subject must be adequately disguised in publication.

6. Presentation of Research Findings
The sociologist must present his findings honestly and without distortion. There should be no omission of data from a research report which might significantly modify the interpretation of findings.

7. Misuse of Research Role
The sociologist must not use his role as a cover to obtain information for other than professional purposes.

8. Acknowledgment of Research Collaboration and Assistance
The sociologist must acknowledge the professional contributions or assistance of all persons who collaborated in the research.

9. Disclosure of the Sources of Financial Support
The sociologist must report fully all sources of financial support in his research publications and any special relations to the sponsor that affect the interpretation of the findings.

10. Distortion of Findings by Sponsor
The sociologist is obliged to clarify publicly any distortion by a sponsor or client of the findings of a research project in which he has participated.

11. Disassociation from Unethical Research Arrangements
The sociologist must not accept such grants, contracts, or research assignments as appear likely to require violation of the principles above, and must publicly terminate the work or formally disassociate himself from the research if he discovers such a violation and is unable to achieve its correction.

12. Interpretation of Ethical Principles
When the meaning and application of these principles are unclear, the sociologist should seek the judgment of the relevant agency or committee designated by the American Sociological Association. Such consultation, however, does not free the sociologist from his individual responsibility for decisions or from this accountability to the profession.

13. Applicability of Principles
In the conduct of research the principles ennunciated above should apply to research in any area either within or outside the United States of America (318).

In reference to the "code," Jane Record [21] contends that professional societies recoil from the enforcement of codes. The enforcement of the code has been a problem over the years [3, 4, 6, 22]. The Association passed the "code" but did not create enforcement policies. According to Record, "in the final analysis the integrity of scholarly inquiry can be protected only by the courage of morally accountable individuals."

Special Responsibilities of Evaluation Researchers

Those sociologists engaged in evaluation research whose work falls into the public area must be such morally accountable individuals. They must not only be aware of the before-mentioned problems but of the special interest groups and their relationships with academic research institutions that might affect their work. How often special interest groups "have attempted to frustrate inquiry, to dictate its shape, to suppress or modify its findings, and with degree of success, is difficult to determine" [21]. Evaluation researchers have to be aware of the political context of such research, the reasons as to why a program is being evaluated, and to what use the evaluation will be put.

The most that a code of ethics can do is to highlight responsibilities. Evaluation researchers' responsibilities go beyond any code because of the special nature of their research. There exist many areas where professional responsibilities beyond the code are subject to queation. Five such areas are discussed below.

First, evaluation reports should be understandable. Those that engage in evaluation should communicate the results of their work so that it does not have to be translated before it can be used for policy decisions. Etzioni [9] has complained that the more analytical sciences use an esoteric language that must be translated before it has any meaning for policy makers.

Second, evaluation reports should be completed on time so that policy makers can reach early decisions. "For the basic researcher, science is an open-ended enterprise. There are no intrinsic reasons for the completion of a study at any particular deadline. For the policy maker there are specific times when fundamental decisions will be made and the decisions made then will become the base for more detailed decisions. The policy researcher must schedule his research so as to produce conclusions by that point" [9].

Third, effective methods for presentation of findings and dissimination of findings need to be developed. Researchers should file a report not only with the program under study or the granting agencies but with similar programs as well. Too many reports end up on shelves, never to be read or utilized. If a researcher suspects that a report will be suppressed, those avenues should be explored that will inform those people in power about the contents of the report [26]. Longood and Simmel urge the evaluator to become an advocate for his results and to take part in the rough-and-tumble world of organizational decision making [15].

Fourth, avoid entering into agreements with organizations that have the rights via agreement under contract to censor your report. The ASA committee on ethics has stated that "research administrators should not censor or suppress monographs and research papers produced by the sociological investigation in his program or agency except in the interest of scientific quality and objectivity, nor should the professional investigator tolerate such censorship" [21]. Harold Orlans [18], in an article dealing with ethical problems of research sponsors and researchers, concluded that not "all virtue lies with the pursuit of academic knowledge," not all vice with the use of knowledge for practical purposes, and that the main problem demanding attention is not how to get social scientists more money with fewer restraints. The sponsors of research are not only as human but as moral as we who ask for money: "their motive and ineradicable offense is not their wickedness but their power."

Fifth, researchers need to learn to work with program administrators in a new relationship so that research reports will be more meaningful for policy analysis. Williams [30] contends that research contribution is only possible if social service researchers and the federal bureaucracy can work in a peer relationship. He suggests that in an agency some mechanism (a staff office) must be established in order to create a good working relationship between the social science researcher and the federal bureaucracy. "Policy analysis is a means of synthesizing information including research results to produce a format for policy decisions (the laying out of alternative choices) and of determining future needs for policy-relevant information" [30]. Unless the two entities learn to work together many research reports will have only one perspective and that perspective perhaps will not be meaningful for determining policy choices.

Summary

In this post-Watergate era ethical issues confront every researcher in a variety of different ways. Sociologists in the future, because of lack of employment in academic setting, will perhaps be conducting more evaluative type research. Sociologist in graduate school today should become familiar with the "Code of Ethics" of the ASA and investigate, explore, and discuss other issues (such as the ones mentioned above) that will confront them. The reality today and perhaps in the future is well put by Becker. Ethical cannons "must remain a matter of individual's judgment" [23]. Let's hope that individuals making such judgments at least will have a reference point.

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CHAPTER V

SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR EVALUATING RURAL DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW*

This handbook of evaluative research on rural development sources of information is intended as an evaluator's guide to material which we have found to be most helpful for locating evaluative research reports, articles and reference books. Each of the sources included has been utilized in the amassing of evaluative research references in an ongoing Southern Rural Development Center project, "A Synthesis of Evaluative Research Literature for Rural Development in the Southern Region."

Included in this handbook is detailed information about computerized information retrieval systems whose subject matter is relevant to evaluative research; a listing of those sources of library information which are - and which are not - useful for evaluative researchers; and a brief selected bibliography of references for further information.

One of the major objectives of the present project is to increase awareness of the methods and types of evaluative research literature available to program developers and evaluators. We hope this information guide will help evaluators and other social scientists use their bibliographic search time more efficiently by pointing out sources which have the greatest potential for output.

Computerized Information Retrieval Systems

Included in this section are detailed descriptions of four information-sharing systems which contain many sources related to the evaluation of rural development. Like most information retrieval systems, these four deal with rather specialized areas of study. For information concerning the hundreds of other computerized information retrieval systems offering searches in nearly as many subject areas, the researcher should see:

Kruzas, A. J. (ed.)
1974 The Encyclopedia of Information Systems and Services, Ann Arbor, Michigan: Anthony J. Kruzas Associates.

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*Paper presented by Laura Grayburn, Undergraduate Assistant, Marilyn Magee, Research Assistant, and Myrna S. Hoskins, Research Assistant, all of the Department of Rural Sociology, Texas A&M University at the Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociology Section, Southern Association of Agricultural Scientists, February 1-4, 1976 at Mobile, Alabama.

A word might be offered at this point concerning which "keywords" and "descriptors" tap the most relevant evaluative literature indexed in these information systems. Listed below are these "keywords": EVALUATION, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, POLICY, PROGRAM, ACTION RESEARCH, PROGRESS.

Smithsonian Science Information Exchange (SSIE)

Director: David F. Hersey, Ph.D., President

Address: Smithsonian Science Information Exchange
1730 M. Street, North West, Room 300
Washington, D.C. 20036

Telephone: (202) 381-5511

Subject Matter: Ongoing research, sponsored by both federal and non-federal organizations, in all fields. SSIE answers questions about who is working on what problems, at what location, and with what support. It organizes, tabulates, and summarizes research support and prepares surveys of research in broad areas. SSIE prepares material by contract for publication in response to requests for catalogs of ongoing research by various organizations. It carries on a program of issuing periodic information in the form of selective dissemination searches, and it maintains a registry of basic and applied research being undertaken. SSIE covers life, physical and social sciences, including medicine, agriculture, education, community programs, engineering, water resources and other traditional science areas. Coverage is limited to projects at an early stage, prior to research results and publications.

Turnaround Time: About two weeks.

Cost: Cost is $50.00 per search which yields up to fifty notices of research projects, $10.00 for each additional notice of research projects. Presearched packages are available (not customized, however) at lower costs.

Availability: Services are available to all; however, an entire program of a supporting agency may not be released without that agency's permission. Search services may be ordered from the SSIE by letter, telephone, or by cable (Telex 89495).

Utility: Of the references retrieved, approximately 63% were included as useful sources in the present project's evaluation bibliography.

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

Director: Everett D. Edington

Address: ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools
Box 3AP
New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003

Telephone: (505) 646-2623

Subject Matter: The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) has sixteen different scopes, each covering a specific area. The scopes are: ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling and Personnel Services; ERIC Clearinghouse on Urban Education; ERIC Clearinghouse on Early Childhood Education; ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management; ERIC Clearinghouse on the Handicapped and Gifted Children; ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education; ERIC Clearinghouse on Information Resources; ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges; ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linquistics; ERIC Clearinghouse for Reading and Communication Skills; ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Science Education; ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education; ERIC Clearinghouse on Tests, Measurements, and Evaluation; and ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools (CRESS). Of these scopes, the most important for this evaluation project is the ERIC/CRESS. ERIC/CRESS acquires, indexes, and abstracts information related to all aspects of American Indian education, education in small schools, Mexican American education, migrant education, outdoor education, and rural education. Research reports, program evaluations, curriculum guides, instructional materials, professional information, and many other kinds of information which would be of value to an educator or educational researcher are gathered, evaluated and made easily accessible through the ERIC indexes; RIE and CIJE.

The Research in Education (RIE) is a monthly journal published by the U.S. Government Printing Office, containing resumes and indexes. Each item is indexed by subject, author, or principle researchers, and sponsoring institution. Complete texts of most documents cited in RIE are available from the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS).

The Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE) provides detailed indexing by subject and author for articles appearing in over seven hundred educational and education-related journals. Users should use their local resource centers and libraries to locate the journals cited. The CIJE index is published monthly by Maxmillan Information, Riverside, New Jersey.

Turnaround Time: From ten days to two weeks.

Cost: If the computer search is used, the cost varies according to state from $15.00 to $30.00.

Availability: It is available to anyone wishing to use it. In fact, many resource centers and libraries have the ERIC indexes available and also maintain the complete ERIC microfiche collections which may be utilized by the public. Users can obtain hardcopy printouts of information contained on fiche at cost, depending on the article.

Utility: Of the references retrieved, approximately 35% were included as useful sources in the present project's evaluation bibliography.

Current Research Information System (CRIS)

Director: Mr. John Meyres

Address: Current Research Information System
United States Department of Agriculture
Washington, D.C. 20250

Telephone: (202) 447-7273

Subject Matter: CRIS is a centralized, computer-based agricultural research information system administered by the USDA-Cooperative State Research Service (CSRS) for the benefit of State Agricultural Experiment Stations of Forestry, Land Grant Colleges of 1890 and Tuskegee Institute. All 53 State Experiment Stations and the USDA furnish forms for all active research projects. Research projects are submitted annually and are entered into the computerized information management system. For each work unit for which information is requested, the following must be specified:

1. Name and address of recipient
2. Date information is needed
3. A statement of informal needs (be as specific as possible, within 100 words)
4. Level of research required

Requests are edited by report analysts at CSRS to assure that proper codes for commodities, activities, research problem areas, and keywords have been used to identify relevant research being conducted in other states. These facilitate rapid retrieval of the information in a form which is useful for the requesting organizations. For each request CRIS will give the name of the principal investigator, performing institution, and department, and will also give a brief description of the project-title, objectives, plan of work, and current progress, including the more important recent publications.

Turnaround Time: Two to four weeks.

Cost and Availability: This information is available to those affiliated with the State Agriculture Experiment Station at no cost by submission of informal retrieval forms to CSRS.

Utility: Of the references retrieved, approximately 80% were included as useful sources in the present project's evaluation bibliography.

Cataloging and Indexing System of the National Agricultural Library (CAIN)

Director: Ronald J. Walton

Address: Cataloging and Indexing System of the National Agricultural Library
National Agricultural Library
United States Department of Agriculture
10301 Baltimore Boulevard
Beltsville, Maryland 20705

Telephone: (301) 344-3750

Subject Matter: Literature search services have been primarily in the form of current awareness profiles. These profiles have been made available to U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers through the Department's Agricultural Research Service. General public access has been available through the Universities of Florida and Georgia, and a number of other locations around the world.

On-line interactive bibliographic search and retrieval service was put into operation July 1973. This data base consists of 16 magnetic tapes which contain catalog and bibliographic data on all monographs and many journal articles received by the National Agricultural Library. This file contains over 700,000 records.

The subject category most relevant to the evaluation of rural development programs is 0505 General Agriculture and Rural Sociology, including human ecology, social psychology, social effects, social institutions; rural organizations and movements, leadership, farmer political power; health, welfare, etc., affecting family life; rural-urban relations; population migration to urban areas; social aspects of migratory and contract labor, women as laborers, sharecroppers, etc.

Cost and Availability: Free of charge to employees of the USDA and to on-site users of the NAL's resources. On-line searching may also be used at the discretion of the reference staff in answering queries for information received by mail. Scientists and researchers outside of USDA can get on-line to CAIN through Lockheed Information Systems, Palo Alto, California, or Systems Development Corporation, Santa Monica, California.

The Library

Automated Information Retrieval Service

Most major university libraries also have a computerized literature searching service called the Automated Information Retrieval Service. The AIRS offers a wide range of on-line bibliographic and statistical data bases. All major fields of inquiry are represented in the data bases. Types of materials retrieved by the system range from technical reports and patent information to published articles and project descriptions for current research activities. Information is retrieved through keywords or combinations of such words appearing in titles, in abstracts, or in a list of subject terms. Items can also be recalled by author, by publication name, and/or other categories. Output consists of a list of citations containing the specified combinations of keywords. Full bibliographic information, and in some cases, abstracts are provided. Most searches cost from $15 to $30. Charges are assessed by the minute according to phone-time and computer-time. This system contains the indexes of such information systems as: CAIN- Cataloging and Indexing System of the National Agricultural Library; ERIC- Educational Resources Information Center; SCISEARCH- Science Citation Index; SOCIAL SCISEARCH- Social Science Citation Index; SSIE- Smithsonian Science Information Exchange; and PSYCHABS- Psychological Abstracts. To initiate a search, contact a university library.

Literature Search

For literature searches limited to standard library search methods, the list of journal abstracts, readers' indexes, and journals below outlines those sources which are most efficient in terms of time spent and number of references contained which pertain to evaluative research literature, as well as those which were of little use relative to this subject matter.

Useful

(a) Sociological Abstracts: particularly the Rural Sociology Section and abstracts of papers presented at the annual Rural Sociological Society; see 1968 and 1971 to present.

(b) Dissertation Abstracts: in particular see those prior to 1967; once dissertations of relevance are located, however, their authors are often difficult to locate and their manuscripts obtained. See subject areas "Evaluation" and "Project."

Non-useful

(a) Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature

(b) Winchell's Guide to Reference Books

(c) Subject Guide to Books in Print

(d) Monthly Catalogue of U.S. Government Publications

Useful	Non-useful

(c) Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE): an index of all manuscripts included in ERIC files, as well as manuscript ordering information.

(d) Social Science Citation Index: a listing of titles and authors, by subject area, etc., which have appeared in recent social science journals.

(e) Development of Society
Evaluation
Human Organization
Journal of the Community
Journal of Extension
Social Issues
Sociological Methods & Research
Social Work
Theory and Practice
Transaction
Welfare in Review

The Card Catalogue is most useful for locating reference books which may have extensive bibliographies; in the subject catalogue see "Evaluation," "Action Research," and "Programs" in particular.

Selected Bibliography

In this section are selected references which either deal specifically with Rural Development evaluative research and/or offer extensive bibliographies or special journal issues pertaining to this subject area.

Books

Struening, Elmer and Marcia Guttentag (eds.)
Handbook of Evaluation Research, Vol. I & II. Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1975.

Weiss, Carol (ed.)
Evaluating Action Programs: Readings in Social Action and Education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1972.

Special Journal Issues Devoted to Evaluation

Sociological Methods & Research. Vol. 4, No. 2, August, 1973.

Journal of Extension. No. XIII, March-April, 1975.

Newsletters

Evaluation and Rural Development. Department of Rural Sociology, 315 Agriculture Building, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843.

CRD (Community Resource Development) Newsletter. U. S. Department of Agriculture, Extension Service, (John S. Bottum, Assistant Administrator, Rural Development Service, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250).

CHAPTER VI

EVALUATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT*

Introduction

Recent guidelines for rural development (RD) programs have explicitly mandated evaluation. For example, the guidelines for Title V of the Rural Development Act of 1972 require program evaluations from agencies involved in the conduct of the program. This often places a requirement on RD staff to perform a new function—one in which they usually have little training or experience. Although a new activity requirement, evaluation should not be taken lightly since it provides information that may be used to improve programs; or, in extreme cases, information on which the continuance of programs is decided. In fact, our preferred definition of evaluation is centered on these two purposes. Evaluation first tells us how programs work and what are their successes and failures--an activity we think can best be achieved through hard-nosed, independent research. Second, evaluation seeks to produce information that can be used to intelligently discern alternatives for program improvement and change.

Evaluation Models

Evaluation, like any other developing discipline, has adopted a particular jargon. Because it is such a relatively new discipline, numerous "models" exist for evaluation. Each model is advocated by a particular group and tend to represent the perspectives and biases of that group. The term "model" is somewhat of a misnomer. Most evaluators use the terms "models," "frameworks," and "approaches" interchangibly. A more accurate descriptor might be "evaluation process" since most "models" depict a process whereby programs can be evaluated.

In our review of evaluation literature, we have identified more than fifty "evaluation models." They tend to reflect a variety of jargons and emphases; however, it is our opinion that they share certain characteristics. We have found by overlapping the phases of the numerous models that most share a set of common, underlying processes. Recognizing these similarities, a synthetic model has been constructed which appears in the following sketch.

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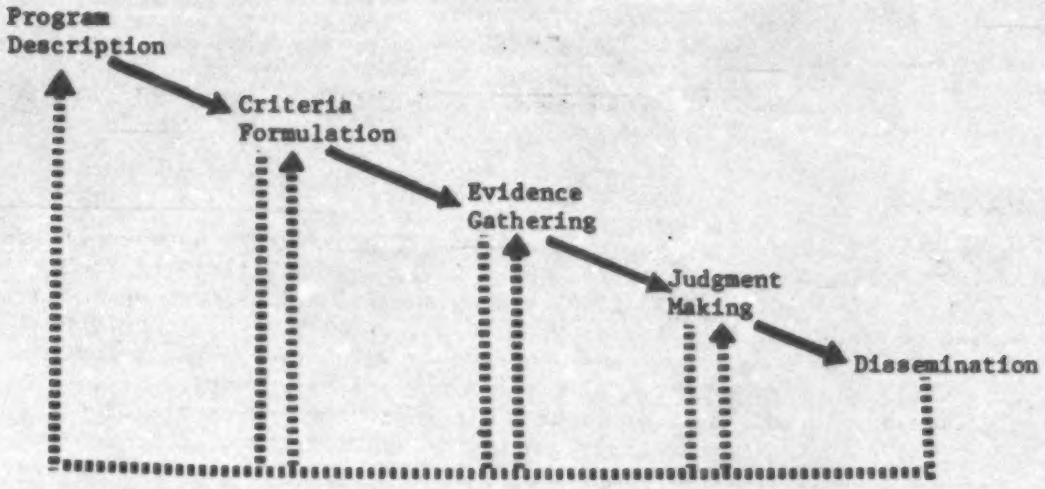
*This article by Arthur G. Cosby, Associate Professor, Department of Rural Sociology, Texas A&M University and G. Richard Wetherill, Research Sociologist, U.S. Forest Service, Southern Forest Experiment Station is reprinted from Western Wire, Vol. 3, No. 1 (1977), published by the Western Rural Development Center at Corvallis, Oregon.



This synthetic model demonstrates the five basic phases of the evaluation process. The first phase (program description) involves documentation as to the program's goals and objectives, operation, and environment. The second phase (criteria formulation) sets out the criteria, or acceptable levels of performance, that the program is supposed to meet. The evidence-gathering third phase is needed so that scientific data collection can be made on the already-established evaluative criteria. In the fourth phase (judgment-making), the data collected in the third phase are compared to the criteria set in the second phase in order to arrive at conclusions regarding program successes and failures. The last phase in our evaluation model is the dissemination of findings both back into the program and to appropriate audiences. The dotted arrows in the above illustration indicate that feedback within the model to an earlier phase is possible, and in some cases desirable, when respecifications in the design are deemed necessary.

Information on Evaluation

One of the myriad of problems to the beginning evaluator is locating information on the evaluation enterprise. Lacking scientific formal (or easily identifiable) mechanisms for dissemination of evaluation information, the basic works on evaluative research have been found in the literature of numerous disciplines. Writers from education, public health, sociology, public administration, and economics have contributed knowledge about the fundamentals of evaluation. This implies that the evaluator must be familiar with diverse sets of literature being produced in disciplines other than his own.

A more troublesome information difficulty is the "fugitive" nature of much evaluation information. Our reviews have indicated that the vast majority of references, especially those reporting the actual evaluation of programs, appear only as mimeographed reports, unpublished papers, and research monographs. This means that the evaluator must also become adept at searching for information in order to keep abreast of the current state-of-the-art.

In addition to the standard library search procedures, we have found the use of computerized, retrieval systems very helpful--especially with unpublished reports. Many agencies and institutions have this resource available. One benefit here is that someone within the agency or institution is supposed to know how to use the systems that are available. Some of the more available retrieval systems are the Education Resources Information Centers (ERIC) scattered about the country. For personnel in rural development, the ERIC/CRESS center at New Mexico State University is probably the most useful one. Other systems available are: Smithsonian Science Information Exchange (SSIE); Current Research Information System (CRIS); Cataloging and Indexing System of the National Agricultural Library (CAIN); and the Automated Information Retrieval Service (AIRS) available through most major university libraries.

Perhaps the best indicator of the emerging maturity of evaluation research as a specialized sub-discipline within the social sciences is the recent printing of three major resources. In late 1975, Sage Publications printed (under the editorship of Guttentag and Struening) the first comprehensive work on evaluation: The Handbook of Evaluation Research. This two-volume handbook brings together chapters dealing with practically all the issues critical to the conduct of evaluation. Scarcely more than a year later, Sage has undertaken the publication of a professional journal, Evaluation Quarterly, which was the first research periodical of its kind directed toward the practice of evaluation. At this writing, a second research journal for evaluation (this one from Pergamon Press) is scheduled for distribution in the spring. Needless to say, these three are indications of a fast-growing market for evaluation.

Recognizing that the vast majority of extant literature on evaluation and rural development is of a rather fugitive nature, a network of researchers in the Southern Region (in conjunction with the Southern Rural Development Center) have been compiling bibliographies in this area. The preliminary bibliography completed in 1976 contains about 600 references with subsections on: major sources, definitions of evaluation, criteria setting, evaluation strategies, responsibilities and ethics in evaluation, and research-in-progress. An updated and annotated version of this bibliography is now available from the Southern Rural Development Center, Box 5406, Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762. While the current supplies last, copies of the preliminary bibliography may be obtained by contacting the Department of Rural Sociology, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843.

Evaluation Training

Formal evaluation training is even more "fugitive" than evaluation information. To our knowledge, there is a general lack of systematic training programs that combine a focus on rural development and program evaluation. If our observations are correct, from where will the needed expertise come for evaluating RD programs? Most RD evaluation seems to be conducted in-house at this time, with project staff allowing only a part of their time to the evaluation function. This approach assumes that sufficient expertise exists within the project to carry out the evaluation requirement.

Frankly, we are currently falling far short of this assumed level of expertise. Also, we feel that this deficiency is a key contributor to the problems that are encountered in evaluating RD programs. We anticipate that this lack of expertise will continue in the future unless systematic training in evaluation and rural development is initiated in key locations around the nation.

Presently, the primary educational activity for RD evaluation comes from sporadic workshops and short courses. We fear that the impetus for such short-training courses results, more often than not, from eleventh-hour needs for evaluation rather than from an intent to build-in evaluation as an integral long-run component of rural development, with consequences of low-quality, patchwork research.

The solution to this expertise problem seems, in our minds, to be based on two types of educational programs. First, there is an obvious need for the development of graduate programs which emphasize both rural development and program evaluation. Currently, the centers for advanced studies in evaluation (such as those at the University of Virginia, the University of California--Los Angeles, and the University of Massachusetts) tend to stress the substantive areas of education and health. No parallel training centers have evolved for rural-based development programs. It would seem appropriate that our land-grant universities (which have an explicit emphasis on the hinterlands) should initiate such graduate training. However, we are not calling for a proliferation of educational programs in evaluation. It is our guess that three or four strategically located centers would meet the long-run needs of RD evaluation.

As a second solution, the motivation for, and philosophy underlying workshops and short-courses should be drastically remolded. In this short-term solution, program leaders need to emphasize training at the earliest possible phase of program development. Workshops should be systematized to include all facets of evaluation. At the state and national level, the responsibility should be accepted, and resources allocated, for evaluation well in advance of the need for reports. This second strategy is simply to systematically upgrade in-house staff.

A Program Design and Evaluation Workshop

One attempt to offer more effective evaluation training within the workshop format has been sponsored through the Southern Rural Development Center. In this workshop, participants from the Southern Region were immersed in an intensive, four-day program that combined program evaluation and rural development. The workshop design began with a general orientation of concepts, designs, and strategies of evaluation. From this beginning, participants intensely examined the methods and techniques of a particular evaluation model (Provus' Discrepancy Evaluation Model). Then, participants applied the Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM) to their own programs.

Recently connected with the University of Virginia's Educational Evaluation Center, Dr. Andres Steinmetz (the workshop's director) has been working with the educational program-oriented DEM in order to adapt it to the special problems of evaluating rural development programs. A pilot workshop conducted in the Fall of 1976 with South Carolina Title V Personnel demonstrated that the DEM training may be an effective vehicle for establishing evaluation within rural development.

The DEM as one strategy for evaluating RD programs has many salable features. One of the best features of the model is that the strategy for accomplishing evaluation requires detailed documentation of the program and its components. Another unique feature of the model is its apparent simplicity of comprehension and utilization. In essence, the DEM strategy of evaluation is that of: (1) establishing standards for the program, (2) measuring program performance as accomplishments, and (3) analyzing the discrepancy between standards and performance as an evaluative indicator. A net-working language (LOGOS) facilitates the program design and evaluation process.

A Concluding Comment

Although forecasting the future is at best a hazardous enterprise, we feel that there are some indications that the demand for quality evaluation will dramatically increase in the near future. Our "guesstimation" relies heavily on the new administration's expressed preference for zero-based budget systems of program financing. If zero-based budgeting becomes the model method of financing government programs, there should be a tremendous increase in requests for rigorous, high credibility research that tells which programs are working and how programs can be changed to improve their effectiveness. Put another way, we expect evaluation research to play a significant role in the budgetary process. From the point-of-view of the evaluation researcher, we suspect the institution of a more formal system of evaluation with less options left to the program administrator. We also anticipate a much higher demand for rigorous evaluation, since credibility of evaluation information with policy makers will become a critical concern.

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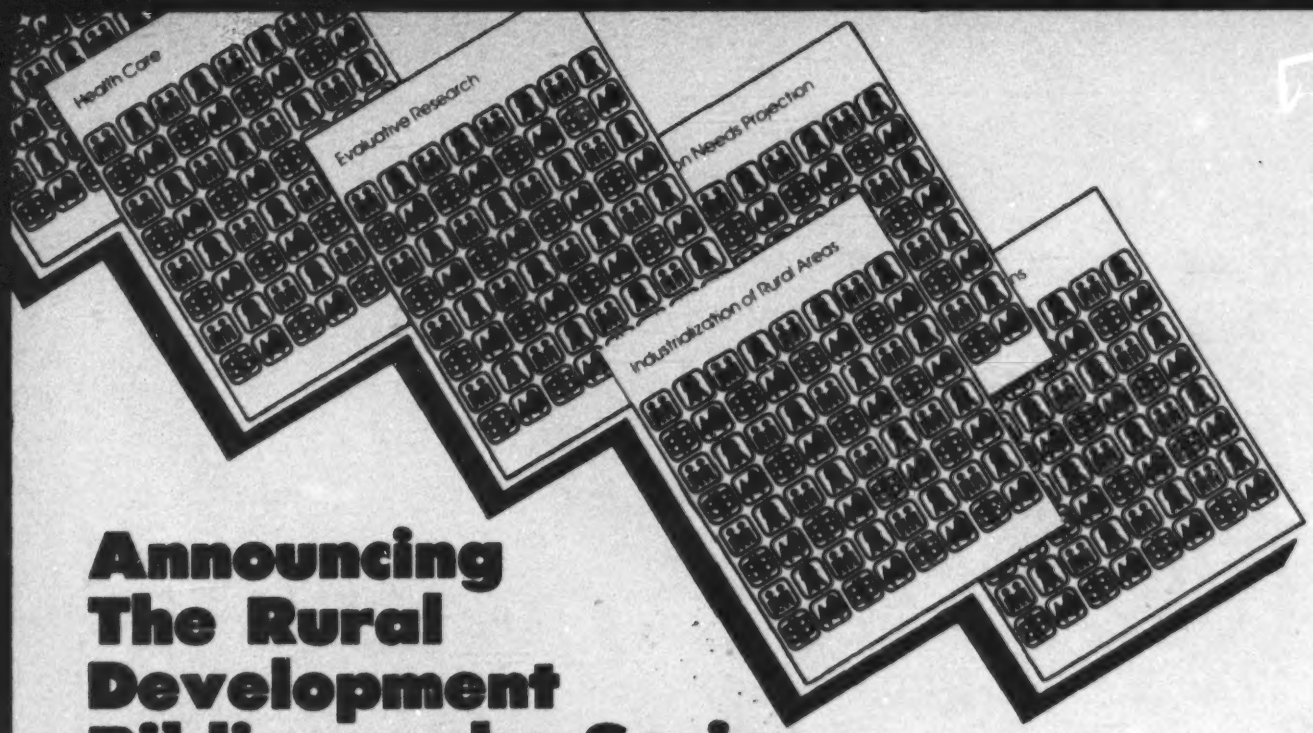

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